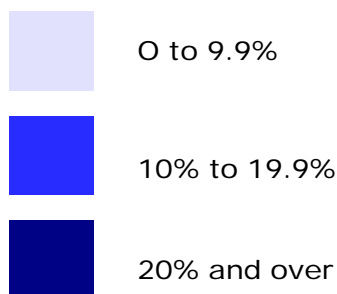
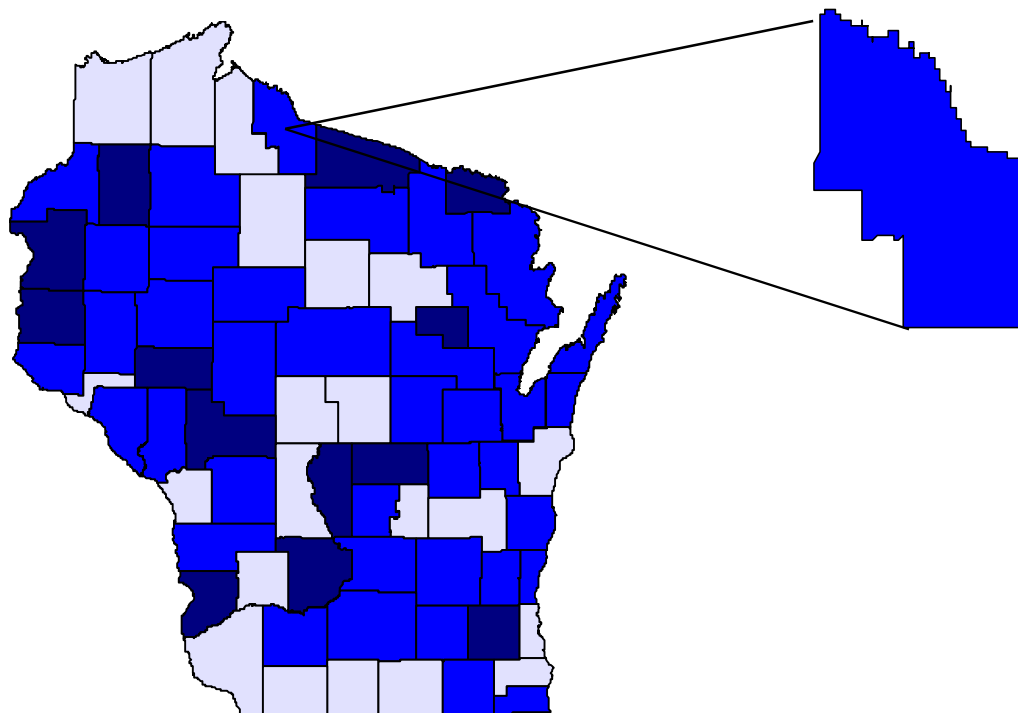


# Iron County Workforce Profile

Job Growth 1994 to 1999



Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development  
Division of Workforce Solutions  
Bureau of Workforce Information  
October 2001



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development

## Introduction

The County Workforce Profile has been developed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Bureau of Workforce Information (BWI) to provide a broad overview of Iron County's labor market. The data included in this fourth year of publication is for 1999 to maintain consistency with the previous publications and to provide the user with a single year of reference in order to draw comparisons and form a picture of related labor force and employment information.

A variety of economic and demographic labor market information have been provided to describe the current labor market conditions in the counties and regions of Wisconsin. That information includes 1999 data on population, labor force, industries, employment, wages and income. The narrative describes how local conditions have changed over one-year and five-year intervals. Although population information is available from the 2000 census, it is not included in this publication since the period of time selected for all data sets is 1999. For more recent releases of information please consult the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Labor Market Information website: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi>.

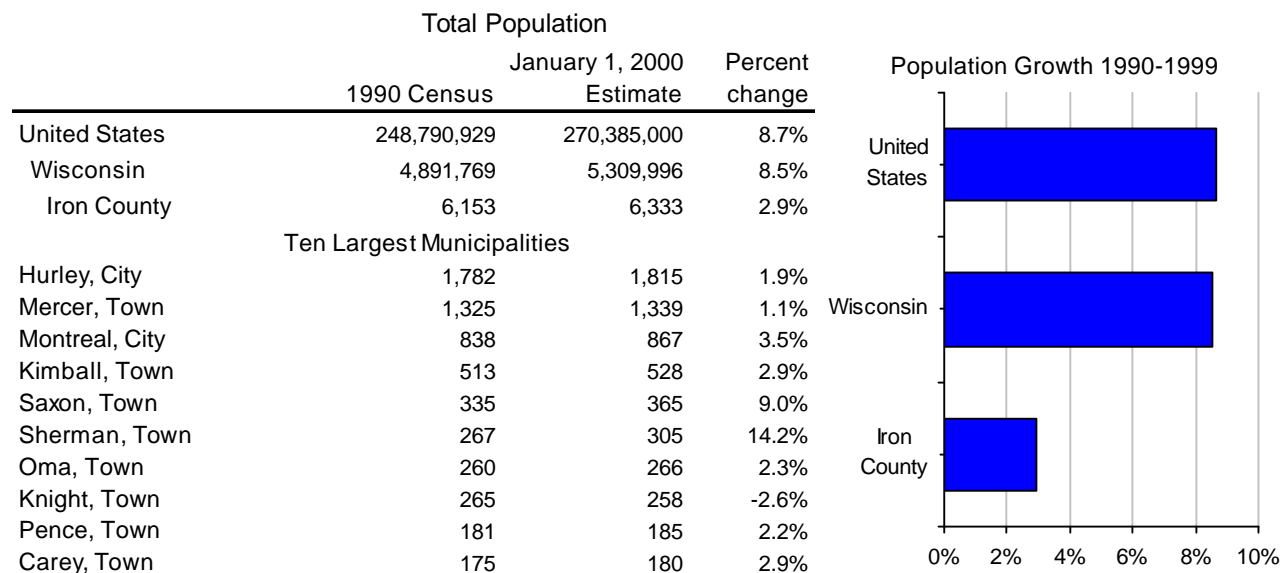
For more detailed information or clarification, please contact your local labor market analyst, Beverly Gehrke, by telephone (715-634-5289) or email ([gehrkb@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:gehrkb@dwd.state.wi.us)).

DWD is an equal opportunity service provider. If you need assistance to access services or material in an alternate format, please contact the analyst listed above.

## Iron County Population and Civilian Labor Force

The total population in Iron County grew 2.9 percent from 1990 to January 2000, less than both state and national expansion. The largest numeric increase in population was in the Town of Sherman, where the population grew from 267 to 305. Roughly 21 percent of the increase in county population since 1990 occurred there. All of the growth in the county occurred from migration. In fact, the number of people migrating (530) exceeds the total increase in population. This produced a net migration rate of 8.6 percent, more than double the state migration rate of 3.7 percent.

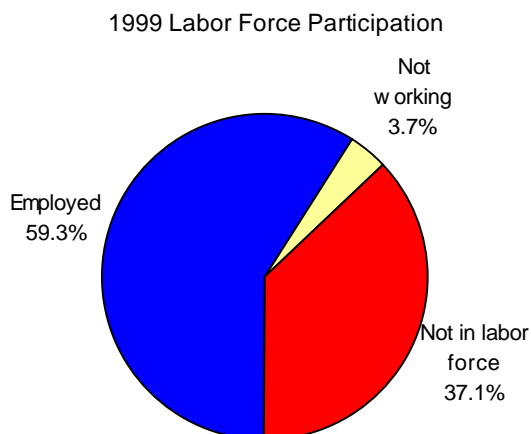
Of the 6,333 residents living in the county at the end of 1999, 5,200 (82%) were 16 years and older. Since 1990, this population segment increased by 212, while the segment aged 15 years and under decreased by 32, resulting in the net county population increase of 180.



Source: WI Dept. of Admin., Demographic Services Center, *Official Population Estimates*, January 1, 2000

The segment of the population 16 years and older is important because the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics use the age of 16 as the demarcation point for entrants into the potential labor force. The labor force, by definition, includes those who are either working or looking for work, but does not include individuals who have made a choice to not work: retirees, homemakers, and students; nor does it include institutional residents, military personnel, or discouraged job seekers.

Labor force participation increases and contracts with changes in labor market conditions. For example, each spring the Iron County labor force expands as seasonal workers enter the labor market either to begin a job or to start looking for work.



Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Administration population estimates, Jan 2000, US Census Bureau, and Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The number of residents aged 16 years and over who are in the labor market determines the labor force participation rate. In 1999, the non-institutional population 16 years and over was 5,086. Of those, 3,200 were actively participating in the labor force and the labor force participation rate was 62.9 percent. While that is an increase from 1990, it is below both the state and national participation rates of 72.3 and 67.1 percent, respectively.

As younger residents age, interest in working and holding a job increases. Teenagers are less likely to participate in the labor force because they are in school. Residents between the ages of 25-54 share the most incentives to work and have the highest participation rates. At 55, however, workers begin to withdraw from the labor market and, by 65, most workers have retired.

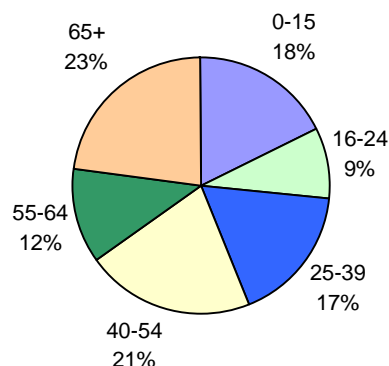
The largest age group in 1990 was already over 65 years old and comprised 30 percent of the labor force age population (16 years and older). By 1999, it was still the largest although slightly smaller and comprised 28 percent of the labor force age population. Less than 10 percent of residents over 65 years old participate in the labor force. This is the primary reason the labor force participation rate in the county is so much lower than state participation.

The second largest group in 1999 was the 40-54 year old segment. This reflects aging of the younger age group and the high migration rate of people moving to the county and accounts for a large portion of the work force. As this segment of the population ages, however, the county labor force will depend to a greater degree on new workers who move to the county.

Iron County Labor Force Age Population Distribution

Age Group	Population 1990 Census	Population 1999 Estimate	Percent change
0-15	1,164	1,132	-2.7%
16-24	540	561	3.9%
25-39	1,210	1,080	-10.8%
40-54	1,011	1,347	33.2%
55-64	723	753	4.1%
65+	1,504	1,459	-3.0%

Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Admin, Demographic Services Center, Official Population Projections 1990-2020 and US Census Bureau



Iron County Civilian Labor Force Data

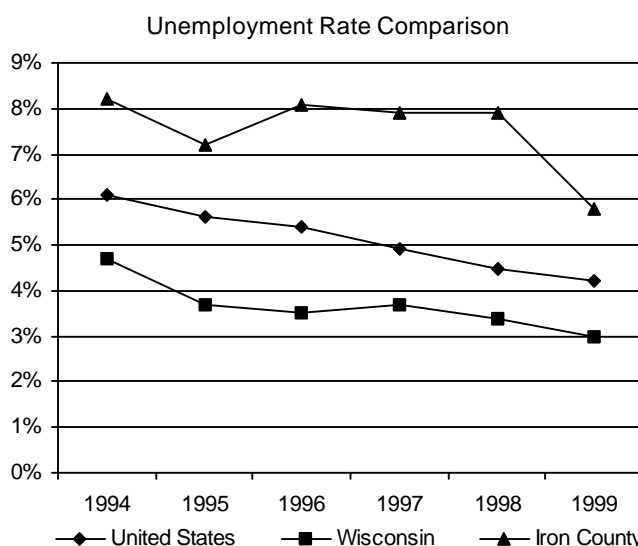
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Labor Force	3,200	3,100	3,300	3,300	3,200	3,200
Employed	2,900	2,900	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Unemployed	260	230	260	260	250	190
Unemployment Rate	8.2%	7.2%	8.1%	7.9%	7.9%	5.8%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate differs from the percent of the labor force age population not working. The unemployment rate is a percent of labor force participants (62.9% of the labor force age population in Iron County) who are unemployed and actively looking for work. The number of unemployed in the county includes not only those who are receiving unemployment benefits, but also any resident who actively looked for a job and did not find it.

Out of a total labor force in Iron County in 1999 of 3,200, 5.8 percent were unemployed. This is much higher than both the state and national unemployment rates of 3.0 and 4.2 percent, respectively, in 1999, but much lower than in any of the previous four years.

Fewer residents were unemployed in 1999 than in the previous four years and many of them found jobs. Even though the number of employed appeared to remain fairly constant (because of rounding), it increased by 50. The number of employed in Iron County includes, in addition to the residents who work for employers located both in and beyond the county boundaries, all self-employed residents



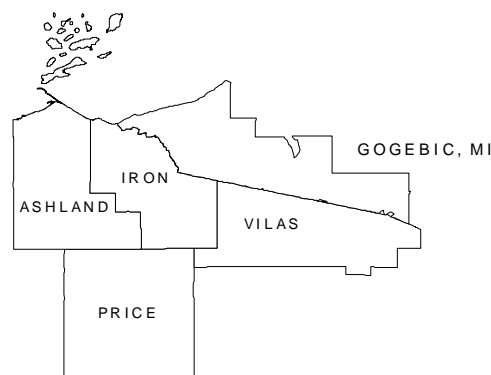
Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

and proprietors. In 1999, there were 840 proprietors in the county, over 100 more than in 1994. The high ratio of proprietors (28%) plus the number of residents who travel beyond the county for work, more than compensates for the difference between the total number of employed of 3,000 and the total number of jobs of 2,200.

## Iron County Commuting Patterns

	Commute To	Commute From	Net Commute
Ashland County	107	10	-97
Price County	39	7	-32
Vilas County	126	40	-86
Oneida County	26	0	-26
Michigan	624	528	-96
Elsewhere	68	2	-66
Total	990	587	-403
Commute within County	1,399		

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information. *Wisconsin's Commuting Patterns*, 1994.

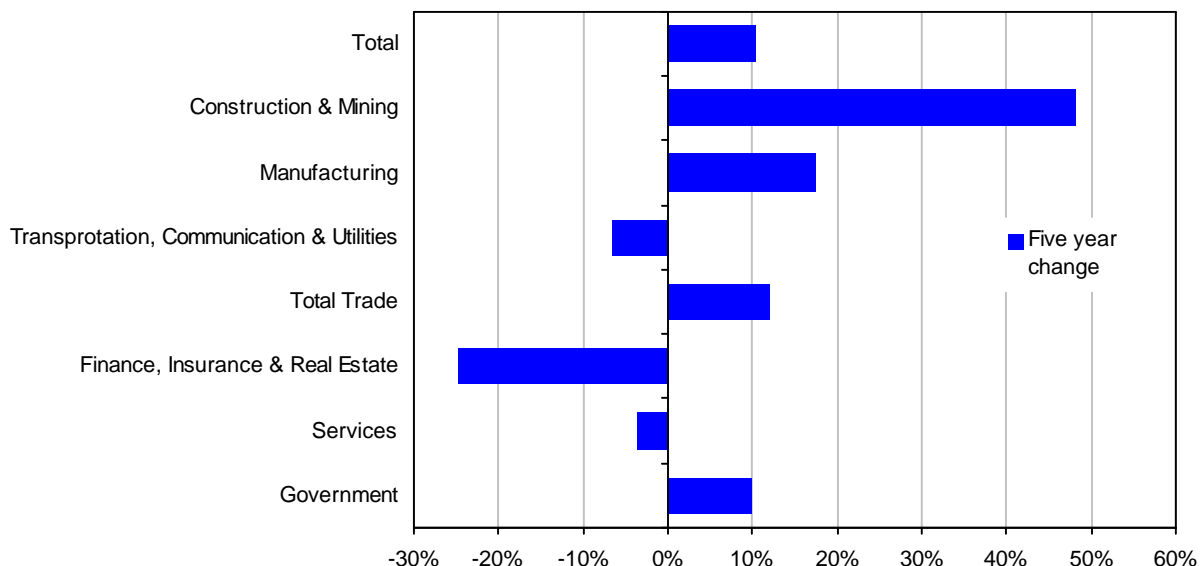


Note: Information on commuting patterns of workers is available only from decennial census data. Since 1990 the number of workers has increased and so has travel on area highways. Until the 2000 census is released, however, the only data we have remains from 1990.

The county labor force includes all employed and unemployed residents who live in the county, even though they may travel out of the county to work. In Iron County that included nearly 1,000 residents who commuted to surrounding communities for a job. The most traveled to destination was the City of Ironwood, adjoining the City of Hurley. Of the 624 who traveled to Michigan, nearly 70 percent of them worked in Ironwood.

Of those who travel into Iron County for work, 90 percent come from Michigan. The City of Hurley is the primary destination for these travelers as it is for Iron County residents. Nearly half of the workers who reside in the county work in Hurley. The rest travel to smaller towns throughout the county. The jobs they are traveling to vary from small manufacturers to restaurants and resorts.

## Iron County Employment Change by Industry 1994 to 1999



	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Percent change	
<b>Total</b>	2,104	2,103	2,148	2,200	2,197	2,322	5.7%	10.3%
<b>Goods Producing</b>	552	527	533	594	637	703	10.4%	27.3%
Construction & Mining	176	147	164	200	240	261	8.3%	48.2%
Manufacturing	376	381	369	393	396	442	11.6%	17.6%
Durable	133	163	176	208	230	283	23.1%	113.7%
Nondurable	244	218	193	185	166	159	-4.3%	-34.8%
<b>Service Producing</b>	1,552	1,576	1,615	1,607	1,560	1,619	3.7%	4.3%
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	63	66	63	55	53	58	10.9%	-6.7%
Total Trade	557	603	610	604	618	625	1.0%	12.1%
Wholesale	41	35	39	49	58	58	1.4%	41.3%
Retail	516	567	571	555	561	566	0.9%	9.8%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	54	57	57	56	53	40	-23.6%	-24.8%
Services & Misc.	530	494	531	533	468	511	9.2%	-3.4%
Total Government	349	355	354	359	368	384	4.4%	10.0%

Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Nonfarm Wage & Salary estimates.

Note: Nonfarm wage and salary employment measures the number of jobs within a county excluding family farming, military, and proprietors. This data, often referred to as 'place of work' data, indicates the number of jobs at the work site without consideration of where the jobholder lives.

Iron County nonfarm wage and salary employment increased 5.7 percent from 1998 to 1999, exceeding the increase statewide over the one-year interval, but fell short of the 11.8 percent increase statewide over the five-year period. Overall, county employers add 220 jobs from 1994 to 1999. Remarkably, two-thirds of those jobs were with employers from the goods producing sector. Since 1994, construction employers added 85 jobs while manufacturers added 65 jobs. Because of this increase, Iron County exceeded state growth in goods-producing jobs in both the one- and five-year intervals. An increase of 150 jobs from durable goods manufacturing employers since 1994 more than compensated for the job reductions from nondurable goods employers. Roughly three-quarters of durable goods employment is with lumber and wood producers, one of the county's largest employing industries.

Service-producing employers added 60 jobs from 1998 to 1999, just 10 shy of the overall increase since 1994. The majority of growth over the five-year interim occurred with retail trade employers. Many retail trade jobs (60%) are with tourism associated businesses: gas stations and restaurants. Another one-quarter are with grocery stores. The expansion of winter tourism activities has helped to reduce the seasonal swings in many of these jobs. Retail trade jobs comprise 24 percent of total nonfarm employment in the county, a much high proportion than the 18 percent share statewide.

# Iron County's Largest Industries and Employers

## Top 10 Industry Groups

Industry Group	March 2000		Numerical Change	
	Employers	Employment	1 Year	5 Years
Lumber And Wood Products	13	270	21	150
Health Services	*	*	*	*
Eating And Drinking Places	32	223	-13	-23
Educational Services	*	*	*	*
Executive, Legislative, And General	14	145	0	3
Apparel And Other Textile Products	*	*	*	*
Food Stores	3	120	8	-11
General Building Contractors	9	109	9	44
Building Materials & Garden Supplies	*	*	*	*
Automotive Dealers & Service Stations	12	83	10	21

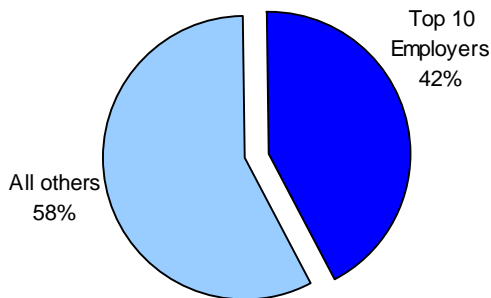
\*data suppressed to maintain confidentiality

## Top 10 Employers

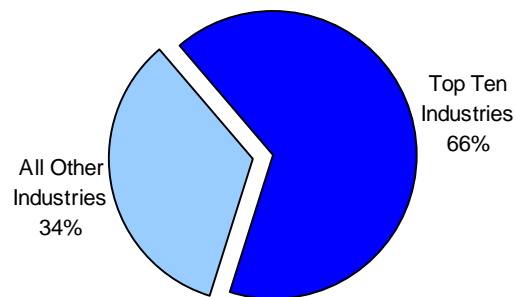
Company	Product or Service	Size
Villa Maria Healthcare Center	Health care services: skilled nursing	100-249
Hurley School District	Education	100-249
Action Floor Systems LLC	Lumber & wood products: flooring	100-249
Art Unlimited LLC	Apparel products: textile printing	100-249
The Copps Corp	Food store: grocery	50-99
Giovanoni True Value Hardware Inc	Building/hardware/garden supply store	50-99
Wayne Nasi Construction Inc	General contractor	50-99
County of Iron	Executive and general government	50-99
School District of Mercer	Education	20-49
Ramada Inn	Hotel and other lodging facilities	20-49

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information Bureau, ES-202 file tape, 1st quarter 1999 and LMI benchmark 2000.

Top 10 Employers Share of Nonfarm Employment



Top 10 Industry Groups Share of Nonfarm Employment

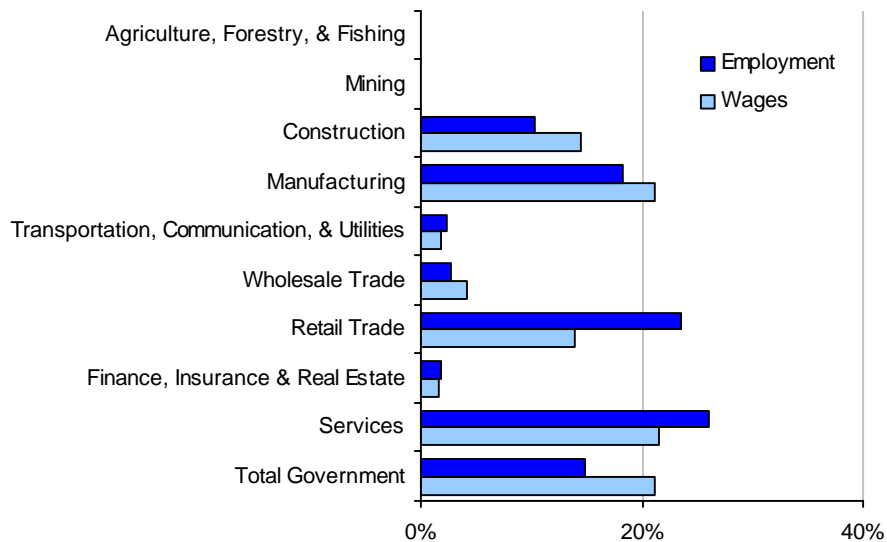


Out of 247 employers in Iron County, ten of them provide 40 percent of the jobs. This is a high concentration of employment in so few employers. The largest employer, providing skilled nursing care, is part of the larger services industry division. The largest industry group, lumber and wood products, is also represented on the list of largest employers. In addition to the third largest employer, the industry includes many smaller sawmill and logging operations in the county. The list of largest employers also includes two school districts. Education services includes both public and private institutions and employment is most often included with the larger government sector since most schools are funded by local taxes. Employment with private education facilities is included in the services industry division. Two employers on the list represent the retail trade industry. In many counties, there are many employers in retail trade, but they are too small to be included in the list of largest employers. That collection of smaller retail stores, however, is the reason that eating and drinking places and auto dealers and service stations are two industry groups on the largest industry group list. Nearly three-quarters of all jobs in Iron County are with employers from the top ten industry groups. This, too, is a high concentration of employment for any county.

## Iron County Employment and Wages 1999

	Annual Average Wage	State Average Wage	Percent of State Average	Percent change 1 year	Percent change 5 year	Number of Workers
All Industries	\$18,835	\$29,609	63.6%	-0.3%	39.0%	2,353
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	\$12,753	\$21,499	59.3%	-36.0%	-7.2%	2
Mining	*	\$39,968	*	*	*	*
Construction	\$26,393	\$36,772	71.8%	-16.1%	23.8%	244
Manufacturing	\$21,769	\$37,773	57.6%	1.2%	58.8%	430
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	\$13,628	\$34,523	39.5%	2.4%	1.3%	56
Wholesale Trade	\$28,900	\$38,048	76.0%	-4.9%	29.6%	65
Retail Trade	\$11,098	\$15,066	73.7%	0.0%	19.9%	554
Finance, Insurance, & Real estate	\$17,859	\$37,911	47.1%	13.1%	51.5%	42
Services	\$15,572	\$26,041	59.8%	5.4%	56.4%	612
Total Government	\$26,946	\$32,017	84.2%	0.3%	21.6%	349

Total Employment and Wage Distribution by Industry Division



Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, *Employment, Wages and Taxes Due covered by Wisconsin's U.C. Law, Tables 209-211.*

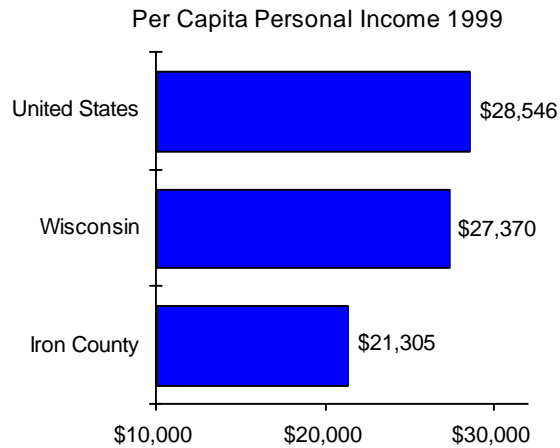
Note – The data from Employment and Wages Covered by Wisconsin's Unemployment Insurance Law differs from employment data in the nonfarm wage and salary estimates because: 1) multi-location employers report all workers and wages at a single site, i.e.. retail franchises; 2) not all employers are covered by the unemployment insurance law and therefore are not included in this data, i.e.. railroads, parochial schools.

Generally, the industries with the most workers also report the highest wages and that applies in Iron County. The services industry had the most workers in 1999 and the highest total payroll of \$9,530,267. This was only slightly higher than the \$9,404,204 payroll of government, however, with nearly half as many workers as services. With fewer workers to share in the payroll, the annual average wage of government workers is more than one-and-a-half times that of services workers. The third highest payroll in manufacturing of \$9,360,590 yielded an annual average wage for production workers that was only 58 percent for similar work in the state. Retail trade, with nearly as many workers as services, had a considerably smaller payroll of \$6,148,425. Since many of the workers are part time, the industry has a high proportion of the county's workers, but a much smaller share of total payroll. All industries reported a total payroll of \$44,319,117.

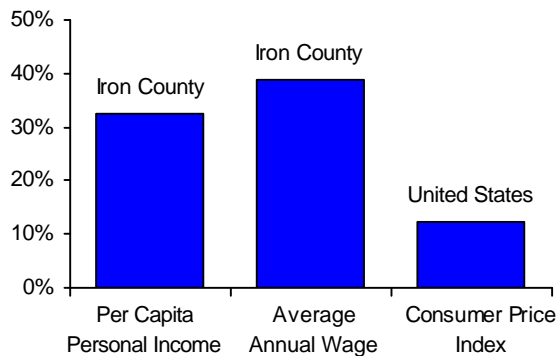
Workers in wholesale trade, who earned the highest annual average wage, earned 76 percent of wages paid to workers statewide in the same industry. The greatest disparity in wages between the county and the state appeared in transportation, communication, and utilities. Overall, wages in the county were only 64 percent of state annual average wage of \$29,609, down from 1998 but still a higher share than in four of the last five years. Wage increases in the county lagged the state increase of 3.8 percent from 1998 to 1999 but exceeded the 21.7 percent increase over the five-year period.



## Iron County Wage and Income Data



Comparison of Selected Data: 1994 - 1999



The per capita personal income (PCPI) includes total income from wages and self-employment, assets (dividends, interest, rent), and transfer payments (social security, insurance, welfare) divided by total population. In 1999, the PCPI in Iron County was 78 percent of the state's, and was lower than 43 other Wisconsin counties.

The PCPI in Iron County, which increased 33 percent in the last five years, exceeded the national and state five-year increases of 26.4 and 26.1 percent, respectively. Annual increases in the PCPI also exceeded both national and state increases in three of the last five years, but not in 1999.

Growth in the county PCPI lagged growth in annual average wages. One reason may be that net earnings comprise a much smaller share of total personal income in the county than they do statewide. Only 54 percent, compared with 67 percent statewide, of total income is from net earnings. Net earnings include not only income from wages of residents (many who work more than one job), but also self-employment and proprietor's income. Income from assets is a slightly higher share in Iron County than the state, 22 versus 20 percent; and the five-year growth was similar, 40 versus 41 percent. Transfer payments, including retirement benefits, comprise 24 percent of total personal income in Iron County and increased 19 percent during the five-year period. That compares with 12 percent share statewide which increased 19 percent.

Per Capita Personal Income

							Percent Change	
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1 year	5 year
United States	\$22,581	\$23,562	\$24,651	\$25,874	\$27,321	\$28,546	4.5%	26.4%
Wisconsin	\$21,699	\$22,573	\$23,554	\$24,791	\$26,227	\$27,370	4.4%	26.1%
Iron County	\$16,075	\$17,222	\$17,967	\$19,314	\$20,360	\$21,305	4.6%	32.5%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System.

Selected Occupational Wage Data

	Mean	Median
Bartender	\$ 7.22	\$ 7.10
Bookkeeper/account clerk	10.37	10.06
Cashier-checker	6.72	6.40
Cook, restaurant	7.93	7.43
Janitor/cleaner	8.70	8.24
Laborer, landscaping & grndskpg	8.94	8.17
Machine feeder/offbearer	7.90	7.75
Maids/housekeeping cleaners	7.25	7.13
Nurse aide	8.74	8.41
Receptionist	8.38	8.21
Registered nurse	18.54	17.99
Retail salesperson	8.40	7.09
Secretary	10.42	10.39
Truck driver, heavy and OTR	14.47	13.39
Woodworking machine setter/ops	9.80	9.68

Source: DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information 1999 OES wage survey for Balance-of-State (non-MSA) counties.

The wages for the selected occupations in this table were reported by employers in non-metropolitan counties in the state who responded to the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey. Employers from all Wisconsin counties participated in the survey but published data was limited to MSAs and a grouping of 'balance-of-state' (BOS) counties. For comparison, the annual average wage of workers in Iron County was 76 percent of that for workers in all BOS counties. However, that varies by industry from 100 percent in the wholesale trade division to 45 percent in transportation, communication and utilities.

Wages play a critical role in the economy as both workers and employers try to capitalize their worth. The labor shortage has placed additional pressure on wages and those occupations with a mean (average) and median (mid-point) wage relatively close reflect that. Mean wages include both very low and high wages, but as the labor market tightens employers offering low wages migrate closer to the mid-point.